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ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
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FM AMEMBASSY DILI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4151  
INFO RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 0046  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0007  
RUEHKL/AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR 0053  
RUEHXS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS  
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RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0037

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 DILI 000297

SIPDIS

FOR DOD/OSD FOR DASD CLAD; STATE FOR EAP/MTS DAS MARCIEL; PACOM  
FOR ADMIRAL KEATING; PACFLT FOR ADMIRAL WILLARD; MARFORPAC FOR  
LTGEN STALDER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/25/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [MARR](#) [EAID](#) [TT](#)

SUBJECT: U.S. PACIFIC FLEET AND U.S. MARINE FORCES PACIFIC EXPLORE  
INCREASED ENGAGEMENT IN TIMOR-LESTE

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CLASSIFIED BY: Major Ron Sargent, US Defense Representative, US  
Embassy, Dili, East Timor, Department of Defense.  
REASON: 1.4 (a), (b), (d)

11. (C) Summary. Teams from both U.S. Pacific Fleet (PACFLT) and U.S. Marine Forces Pacific (MARFORPAC) concluded an assessment trip to Timor-Leste on November 22 designed to determine how they can provide additional assistance to Timor-Leste's security sector. In doing so, members met with a large number of Timorese government, military, and police officials, and interacted broadly with members of the International Stabilization Force, the United Nations Integrated Mission to Timor-Leste, and several diplomatic missions to include Australia, Japan, and Portugal. Potential areas of enhanced engagement include the basing of a Seabee Civil Affairs Team in Timor-Leste; providing a legal advisor to the commander of Timor's military; joining a Portuguese review of Timor's maritime legal framework in early 2009; providing human rights training to the Timor-Leste Defense Force (F-FDTL); conducting hydrographic surveys; and determining the feasibility of a Acquisition Cross-Servicing Agreement and bilateral military-to-military memorandum of understanding between the U.S. Department of Defense and the GOTL Ministry of Defense and Security. MARFORPAC will explore the possible visit of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit in September 2009 to provide training opportunities to F-FDTL, the Australian Defense Force, and the New Zealand Defense Force. Throughout the assessment visit, emphasis was placed on the importance of donor coordination. Poor Timorese capabilities and weak capacity will affect all future assistance. Nevertheless, the Timorese clearly desire U.S. engagement here, and in some cases, even want the U.S. to play the lead role. End summary.

## Trip Overview

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¶2. (SBU) Teams from both U.S. Pacific Fleet (PACFLT) and U.S. Marine Forces Pacific (MARFORPAC) visited Timor-Leste on November 16-22 for the purpose of assessing how they could assist in the development of both Timor's maritime security capability and the Timor-Leste Defense Force (F-FDTL), and in exploring further mil-to-mil opportunities with Australia. Timorese officials engaged included representatives of the Office of the President; Commission B of the National Parliament; Deputy Prime Minister Jose-Luis Guterres; Minister of Infrastructure Pedro Lay; staffers from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Health; Secretary of State for Defense Julio Tomas Pinto; Secretary of State for Security Francisco Guterres; Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak; Interim National Police Commander, Inspector Afonso de Jesus; the National Hospital Director; the National Customs Director, and finally, the National Port Director. There was broad interaction with the Australian Embassy, the International Stabilization Force (ISF), and engagement with the Japanese, Portuguese, New Zealand, and European Union diplomatic missions. There was also a call on Deputy SRSG Takahisa Kawakami of the United Nations Integrated Mission to Timor-Leste (UNMIT). Outreach was also made to the Chinese, Indonesian, Malaysian and South Korean diplomatic missions in conjunction with a security sector donor coordination breakfast hosted by the Ambassador, but none participated.

¶3. (C) A recurring theme throughout the visit was the poor capabilities and weak capacity within all relevant Timorese

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agencies at all levels. This was the view of not only international interlocutors, but also of the Timorese on a uniform basis. With respect to specific Timorese requests for U.S. assistance, Pinto and Ruak collectively expressed a desire for increased opportunities for F-FDTL officers and soldiers to attend professional military education courses in the U.S; assistance in developing training ranges which could be used by F-FDTL, the U.S., and other allied defense forces; and providing a legal advisor to F-FDTL headquarters, preferably one with competence in both common law and the Portuguese language. Ruak said that in the past, requests had been made of both Portugal and Brazil for a legal advisor but that neither had provided one. He added that the development of F-FDTL's maritime security capability was his top priority, and that providing his force with a broad humanitarian assistance / disaster response capability followed. He emphasized that F-FDTL strongly desires assistance in developing the ability to participate in peacekeeping missions abroad in order to repay to the international community some of the goodwill and assistance provided to Timor-Leste since 1999. Naval component chief Commander Donaciano Gomes requested assistance in developing the infrastructure of the Navy base at Hera, and expressed interest in emulating some of MARFORPAC's amphibious capability. In addition, his Portuguese naval advisor said that the component was badly in need of maps based on new hydrographic studies, and that existing Australian maps were not detailed enough to be used in coastal operations.

¶4. (C) During the teams' call on Commission B of the National Parliament, Member of Parliament Ana Pessoa said that she strongly desires U.S. participation in the December 11-12 Security Sector Reform and Development Symposium being organized by the Office of the President. In response, PACFLT plans to send a U.S. Coast Guard captain to make a presentation on "maritime security". During a sidebar meeting with Pessoa, she added that members of the national leadership desire U.S. assistance in founding a think tank which could assist Timor-Leste's policymakers in considering solutions to national strategic challenges. She went on to say that "we" want the U.S. to have the lead role in developing Timor-Leste's maritime

security capability - a point that was underscored in a later meeting with Secretary of State for Security Guterres.

15. (C) Deputy Prime Minister Guterres mentioned that while the U.S. gives much more to Timor-Leste in terms of overall support, China continues to be engaged in several high visibility projects which inflate positive Timorese perceptions of Beijing relative to its true contribution. Guterres noted that while Cuba's medical assistance to Timor-Leste is welcome, Cuba's capabilities were lacking and failing to keep up with 21st Century standards due to that nation's isolation. He also inquired whether USG agencies could provide remedial medical training to the 600 Timorese students currently being trained in Cuba prior to their service in Timor as medical professionals.

16. (C) Throughout the visit of both teams, cooperation from both the Australian Embassy and the ISF was extraordinary. The Embassy hosted an inbrief and outbrief in which information was exchanged openly, and the Australian Defense Attache generously hosted an evening reception which included military representatives from several diplomatic missions, the ISF, and visiting officials from Canberra. The ISF's planners and executors engaged with their counterparts from PACFLT and MARFORPAC on several occasions, building relationships that will form the functional basis of future visits, deployments and exercises which likely will involve U.S. forces working side-by-side with the ISF. In addition, meetings with defense advisors from New Zealand resulted in interest in possible

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future broadened engagement with the New Zealand Defense Force.

How might PACFLT and MARFORPAC assist?

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17. (C) Prior to departing, the teams outlined the following options regarding enhanced engagement in Timor, subject to their headquarters' review and approval. First, PACFLT is considering providing support via a Seabee Civil Affairs Team (CAT) that could conduct humanitarian assistance projects, assist F-FDTL in developing a capability similar to its own, and offer apprenticeship programs to teach engineering skills to Timorese youth. Second, U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) may be able to assist on multiple fronts: the legal advisor request made by Brigadier Ruak; providing human rights and rules of engagement training to F-FDTL; and possible assistance to the Portuguese who may conduct a maritime sector legal assessment in early-2009. PACFLT also believes that the Naval Criminal Investigative Service will be able to provide basic skills training to the National Police and the National Customs Department, and that the Navy Oceanographic Office may be able to support Commander Gomes' advisor's request for maps based on a new hydrographic study in the vicinity of Timor-Leste.

(Note: In a November 25 conversation, the Portuguese Ambassador told us that he was unaware of this legal survey; while welcoming U.S. participation conceptually, he stressed that in the end the Timorese would have to concur and make such a request. End note.)

18. (C) As for assistance in helping F-FDTL's naval component with equipment maintenance, upcoming PACFLT ship visits - such as that of the USS LASSEN in late-September - could provide subject matter expert exchanges which could offer assistance in outboard engine maintenance and other maritime-related operations both ashore and aboard vessel. Lastly, the PACFLT team mentioned that it would look into the possibility of its Naval Medical Research Unit (NAMRU) conducting activities in Timor-Leste. Bringing NAMRU to Timor could potentially be a watershed event in light of the pathogenic research potential which exists here, and possible remedial training that could be provided to Timorese medical professionals educated in Cuba.

19. (C) The MARFORPAC team indicated that its best opportunity for engagement in 2009 was the possible stopover of the 11th

Marine Expeditionary Unit in September. Such a visit would bring unprecedented capacity for engagement in Timor-Leste both with host-nation entities and the ISF, and would be warmly welcomed by the GOTL and Embassy Dili. Possible engagement activities mentioned include both engineer and medical civil action projects in remote parts of the country - something that would be facilitated by the 11th MEU's airlift capability and opportunities for broad engagement with both F-FDTL and the ISF.

Additionally, MARFORPAC has submitted an Asia-Pacific Regional Initiative proposal to PACOM headquarters that would fund orientation travel for several F-FDTL leaders to visit the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, and the Marine Corps Base in Camp Pendleton, to expose them to how the Marines train and develop their soldiers and leaders. Lastly, it was indicated that the visit of the 11th MEU could enable bilateral engagement with the New Zealand Defense Force.

Nothing but upside in Timor-Leste

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110. (C) Embassy Dili is grateful to both PACFLT and MARFORPAC

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for performing their assessment and encourages other subordinate units of U.S. Pacific Command to visit Timor-Leste to similarly reconsider their potential for engagement here. In particular and resources permitting, there would seem to be great scope for the U.S. Coast Guard to increase its engagement in light of Brigadier Ruak's emphasis on developing the country's maritime security capabilities. In terms of its mission, the U.S. Coast Guard provides the best approximation for what F-FDTL's naval component ultimately may resemble. We also see great need and opportunity for further coordination of donor assistance to Timor-Leste's military, especially its maritime sector. Currently, Portugal, Australia, China, India, Germany, New Zealand, Japan and Malaysia have offered or explored various forms of assistance, and strategic discussions are set to begin between Indonesia and Timor-Leste. During PACFLT Commander, Admiral Willard's July 2008 visit to Dili, Secretary of State for Defense Pinto encouraged U.S. facilitation of a maritime donor coordination process. We will continue to explore this with Washington agencies and PACOM.

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